

Some Observations...

Tomorrow, the world will be honoring the resurrection of Jesus. Yet, there is most certainly a very different feeling about this year. Many times Resurrection Sunday does not fall during the Passover season, because of two very different calendars. This year it so happens that the calendars are aligned, not perfectly, but closer.

Where the resurrection of Yeshua occurred during the Passover season, in the midst of the seven days of Matsah. So, the world will be on the same page as us for a change. That is remembering the resurrection of Yeshua on the first day of the week during the Passover season.

There was most certainly a different feeling on Wednesday evening when we had a virtual Seder. I looked up the definition of virtual and this is what I found...

Virtual definition - almost or nearly as described, but not completely or according to strict definition.

Almost or nearly...consider those words as I share more with you...

We went through our Haggadah, remembering the Passover that led to Israel's redemption from slavery. We remembered Yeshua's Passover that led to our redemption from the slavery of sin.

Yet it wasn't the same because it was lacking the physical human contact that we need. A contact that has brought us together as a congregation. A contact that I have heard from many of you is desperately missing right now. We were not meant to be isolated in that Adonai recognised this when we were created...

Gen 2:18 Adonai, God, said, "It isn't good that the person should be alone. I will make for him a companion suitable for helping him."

For those of you who were able to participate in our Seder on Wednesday evening, we most certainly came together, in that we could hear each other (and in some instances see each other) yet it was as if we were all in a small room and when one person spoke it would dominate the room. So, the one on one that we are able to experience while being among everyone at what would have been our regularly scheduled Seder today is missing.

Our virtual Seder was almost or nearly as described, but not fully.

I briefly talked about some of the things we just couldn't do because of our proximity to one another. We were unable to search for the Afikoman and have it ransomed. A symbolism that was not able to be truly conveyed. A symbolism that brings this verse

Mat 20:28 For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve — and to give his life as a ransom for many."

To greater meaning and understanding for us.

We were unable as a congregation together in one place where we could open the door to welcome in Eliyahu ha Navi. An action that on the surface seems small yet the symbolism should not be lost...

Mal 4:5 (3:23) Look, I will send to you Eliyahu the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of Adonai.

We open the door in anticipation of Adonai's promise rather than open the door when someone is knocking.

I imagine a play on the kids in the back seat of the car during a long trip asking persistently, yet to the annoyance of the parents...

Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?

To where Adonai relishes in our eager anticipation...

Is he here yet? Is he here yet? Is he here yet?

We open the door in anticipation not because He is there but because we are anticipating him being there.

Having understood the allusion Yeshua has conveyed to us...

Mat 17:9 As they came down the mountain, Yeshua ordered them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Mat 17:10 The talmidim asked him, "Then why do the Torah-teachers say that Eliyahu must come first?"

Mat 17:11 He answered, "On the one hand, Eliyahu is coming and will restore all things;

Mat 17:12 on the other hand, I tell you that Eliyahu has come already, and people did not recognize him but did whatever they pleased to him. In the same way, the Son of Man too is about to suffer at their hands."

Mat 17:13 Then the talmidim understood that he was talking to them about Yochanan the Immerser.

Then there was probably the most glaring omission from or Seder this year...

The meal we have together. Passover is centered around a meal together.

Originally in the home on that evening when they were instructed to...

Exo 12:8 That night, they are to eat the meat, roasted in the fire; they are to eat it with matzah and maror.

Exo 12:9 Don't eat it raw or boiled, but roasted in the fire, with its head, the lower parts of its legs and its inner organs.

Exo 12:10 Let nothing of it remain till morning; if any of it does remain, burn it up completely.

To the time of Yeshua's last Seder...

Luk 22:14 When the time came, Yeshua and the emissaries reclined at the table,

Luk 22:15 and he said to them, "I have really wanted so much to celebrate this Seder with you before I die!"

It isn't just the meal, but rather the entire experience incorporated around the meal. There is the fellowship in getting together. The joy in partaking and ultimately participating in the seder together, not to leave out our time after our Seder we have a time where we sing and dance together. A time experienced by Yeshua's talmidim as well.

Mat 26:26 While they were eating, Yeshua took a piece of matzah, made the b'rakhah, broke it, gave it to the talmidim and said, "Take! Eat! This is my body!"

Mat 26:27 Also he took a cup of wine, made the b'rakhah, and gave it to them, saying, "All of you, drink from it!"

Mat 26:28 For this is my blood, which ratifies the New Covenant, my blood shed on behalf of many, so that they may have their sins forgiven.

Mat 26:29 I tell you, I will not drink this 'fruit of the vine' again until the day I drink new wine with you in my Father's Kingdom."

Mat 26:30 After singing the Hallel, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

After the meal, they sang the Hallel, likely rejoicing in the words Yeshua had conveyed about the New Covenant and the Kingdom.

Rather than focusing on what we weren't able to do, what positive came from our deprivation.

Deprivation - the lack or denial of something considered to be a necessity.

There was some positive that came out of having to do our Seder differently this year. One of you had conveyed to me...

“I found it more meaningful to have to make my own preparations, rather than just show up for an event. It involved thinking about what I was doing and why.”

Rather than partaking, each of you had to actually prepare your own Seder plate.

This year is most certainly different from years past. Today, we would have been in the throws of preparing for our Seder, yet here we are unable to meet in a physical location, our physical location.

I have heard a few who have made the observation pertaining to Passover that it was more like the Passover when Adonai would bring Israel out of Egypt in that they were instructed to all remain in their homes. They were not permitted to leave, but for their benefit of protection from the tenth plague.

Another symbolism that we could not have experienced had we been in the midst of our regular Seder.

Symbolism - the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities.

Another aspect of the Passover we were able to relate to, that we couldn't before.

How much more meaning has been impressed upon us during this season?

What's the saying?

You don't know what you have until it's gone...

[Heb 10:23](#) Let us continue holding fast to the hope we acknowledge, without wavering; for the One who made the promise is trustworthy.

[Heb 10:24](#) And let us keep paying attention to one another, in order to spur each other on to love and good deeds,

[Heb 10:25](#) not neglecting our own congregational meetings, as some have made a practice of doing, but, rather, encouraging each other. And let us do this all the more as you see the Day approaching.

This is now our fourth Shabbat we are missing as a congregation.

To congregate means “to gather into a crowd”

We may be congregating through our computers, yet when you look around you, in your immediate vicinity of the room where your computer is, is there a crowd? Unfortunately, you are still alone, isolated from your fellow congregants.

As I had conveyed earlier, we were not meant to be alone, isolated, connected by only a wireless connection where we can see and hear, but we can't feel or touch. A few of you have jokingly said to me, “I miss hugs”.

When we come together what do we tend to do when we greet one another...hug.

There will likely be a new ailment as a result of this pandemic – hug deprivation.

I am going out on a limb here, saying that when you are online or on your phone speaking with someone...even though you see them on your screen and hear them, hugging your device does not transmit the experience of a hug of fellowship, either giving it or receiving it.

One of you transmitted..."oh what a reunion it will be"

Consider another reunion that also occurred on the first day of the week during the Passover season...

Joh 20:19 In the evening that same day, the first day of the week, when the talmidim were gathered together behind locked doors out of fear of the Judeans, Yeshua came, stood in the middle and said, "Shalom aleikhem!"

Joh 20:20 Having greeted them, he showed them his hands and his side. The talmidim were overjoyed to see the Lord.

We have much to rejoice about today and will have even more to rejoice about when we reunite as a congregation.

So let us conclude our Shabbat service today by reiterating the First Fruits section from our Passover Haggadah in advance of Ha Bikkurim on Sunday...

First Fruits

Taking a page out of Rabbi Gameliel's book conveying, the seder isn't complete unless these things (Matzah, Maror and the Pesach (Passover) Lamb) are mentioned, our seder is not yet complete. During our Seder we have remembered the Pesach (Passover) and the Feast of Matzah, yet we have not recognized an extremely important part of the Pesach (Passover) season, that being Ha Bikkurim (the First Fruits). As conveyed to Moshe by Adonai in Leviticus 23:

Lev 23:9 Adonai said to Moshe,

Lev 23:10 "Tell the people of Israel, 'After you enter the land I am giving you and harvest its ripe crops, you are to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the cohen.

Lev 23:11 He is to wave the sheaf before Adonai, so that you will be accepted; the cohen is to wave it on the day after the Shabbat.

Lev 23:12 On the day that you wave the sheaf, you are to offer a male lamb without defect, in its first year, as a burnt offering for Adonai.

On the first day of the week during the moad (appointed time) of Matzah, you are to bring your firstfruits to the cohen and wave them before Adonai. The waving of the first fruits is recognition of what Adonai has provided. It would be at this time, on First Fruits, that Yeshua's mission in making atonement and thereby redeeming Yis'rael and the world would be completed.

As recounted in Yochanan's Gospel:

Joh 20:1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Miryam from Magdala went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

With an empty tomb, a once grieving Miryam's tears of sadness likely became tears of joy...

Joh 20:16 Yeshua said to her, "Miryam!" Turning, she cried out to him in Hebrew, "Rabbani!" (that is,

"Teacher!")

Joh 20:17 "Stop holding onto me," Yeshua said to her, "because I haven't yet gone back to the Father. But go to my brothers, and tell them that I am going back to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

To where Yeshua as Cohen ha Gadol would ascend to the Father on Ha Bikkurim (First Fruits), offer Himself as a Kapparah (atonement) for us, ultimately completing His Pesach (Passover) mission as the Lamb of God. What transpired is conveyed in the Book of Hebrews:

Heb 9:11 But when the Messiah appeared as cohen gadol of the good things that are happening already, then, through the greater and more perfect Tent which is not man-made (that is, it is not of this created world),

Heb 9:12 he entered the Holiest Place once and for all. And he entered not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus setting people free forever.

Heb 9:13 For if sprinkling ceremonially unclean persons with the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer restores their outward purity;

Heb 9:14 then how much more the blood of the Messiah, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God as a sacrifice without blemish, will purify our conscience from works that lead to death, so that we can serve the living God!

On the altar of Adonai, the original, not constructed by human hands, where only He accepts a specific sacrifice, that of the Lamb of God, atonement leading to our redemption is made...

Lev 17:11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for yourselves; for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life.'

And on the evening of the same day Yeshua returned to meet with His Talmidim...

Joh 20:19 In the evening that same day, the first day of the week, when the talmidim were gathered together behind locked doors out of fear of the Judeans, Yeshua came, stood in the middle and said, "Shalom aleikhem!"

Thus His time in the Holy of Holies did not extend beyond Ha Bikkurim (First Fruits). Meaning, this day was not just Yeshua's resurrection but also the day in which He redeemed us.

Yeshua was obedient in every aspect of Torah, from honoring all Shabbot to the requirement where we are not to appear before Adonai empty-handed during this Moad (appointed time):

Exo 23:15 Keep the festival of matzah: for seven days, as I ordered you, you are to eat matzah at the time determined in the month of Aviv; for it was in that month that you left Egypt. No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

What was Yeshua's offering?

Mat 27:52 Also the graves were opened, and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life;

Mat 27:53 and after Yeshua rose, they came out of the graves and went into the holy city, where many people saw them.

The only appropriate offering from the one who was the first resurrection, others who would be resurrected.

The Pesach (Passover) sacrifice is more powerful than the asham and chatat sacrifices designated as sin offerings. The Pesach (Passover) sacrifice is more powerful than the Yom Kippur sacrifice where all sin is forgiven during Yis'rael's Day of Atonement. No altar is mentioned in relation to the Pesach (Passover) lamb, yet Yeshua offered Himself on the altar not made by human hands.

The Pesach (Passover) lamb does more than just atone for our transgressions. It actually redeems us from the penalty of our transgressions – death. It was the blood of the Pesach (Passover) lamb applied to the home that when seen by the Angel of Death would cause him to Passover the home and thus save the firstborn from the tenth plague, death of the first born. So too, it is Yeshua, our Pesach (Passover) lamb who not only atones for our transgression, but redeems us from sin's penalty.

Rom 6:22 However, now, freed from sin and enslaved to God, you do get the benefit — it consists in being made holy, set apart for God, and its end result is eternal life.

Rom 6:23 For what one earns from sin is death; but eternal life is what one receives as a free gift from God, in union with the Messiah Yeshua, our Lord.